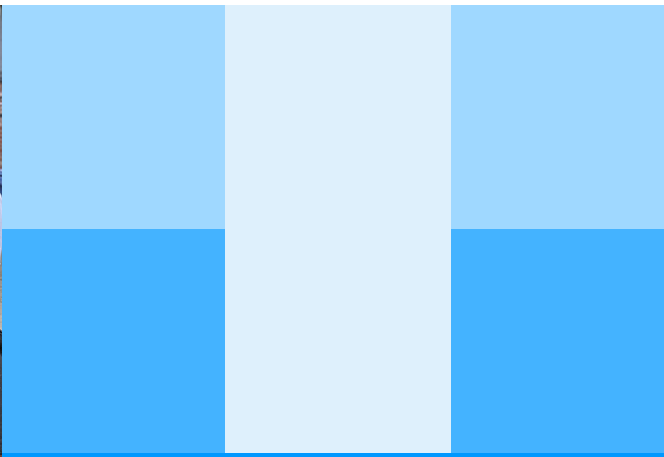
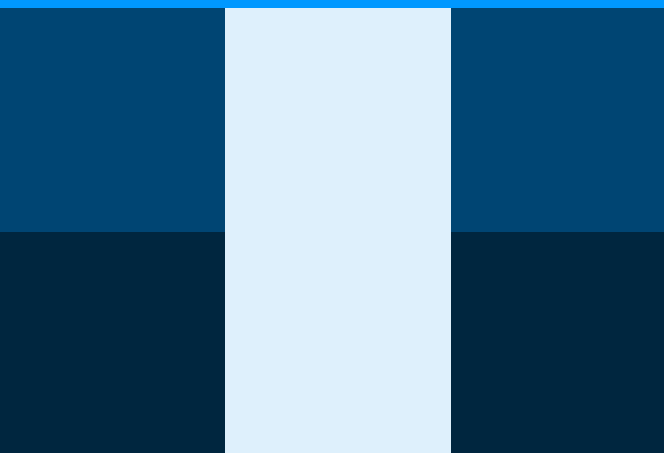


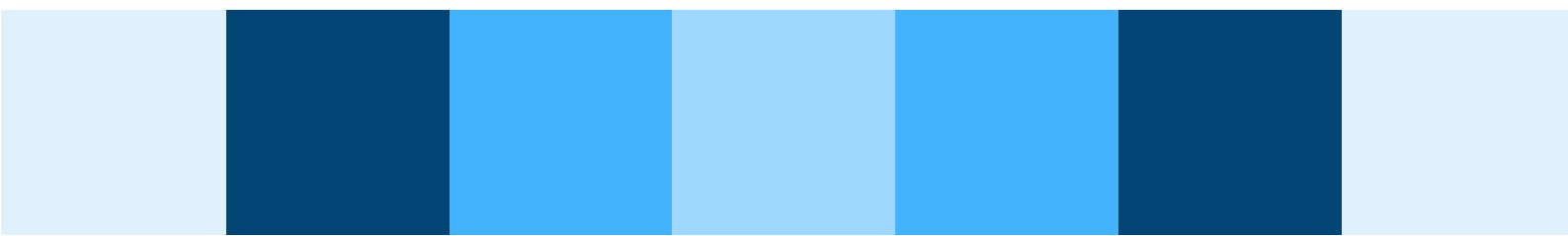
# CHANGING WITH THE COMMUNITY



## HIGHWOOD LIBRARY & COMMUNITY CENTER



# ANNUAL REPORT ■ FISCAL YEAR 2023



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# A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

2022 was a year filled with heartbreaking challenges, but it also demonstrated our community's strength and resilience. I would like to thank all of our partners, volunteers, community members, and the city of Highwood for all the support that has made our work possible. Without your partnership, we could not provide the transformational resources and programs our community needs.

One of our key goals last year was to expand the library's mission to become a Library and Community Center, and thanks to our committed staff, volunteers, Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library Board, donors, and community partners, we have been able to do just that. This Fall, we will launch a new brand that captures and celebrates this new identity.

One of the main highlights of the year was raising the \$4.4M needed to begin our facility renovation project. We broke ground last November and are excited to have it completed by early fall 2023. The new facility will be a welcoming place to provide our patrons with a safe space to learn, play, and build community. Students, job seekers, and families will have access to quality technology, tools, and essential literacy programs. We appreciate the patience and flexibility of our patrons and staff in adapting to a new model of operating while construction takes place.

In addition to the renovation, our health equity initiative grew tremendously thanks to the help of numerous funders who have supported our efforts with grant funding to provide mental health and wellness services to Highwood patrons and around Lake County. These new resources were critical in our ability to provide a first response to the Highland Park shooting. Our licensed therapists were able to give trauma support to community members impacted by the incident. Bilingual mental health services have historically been in short supply. We are grateful for these crucial funding sources that make this work possible and to continue to have the capacity to provide health equity resources to the Highwood community.

It has been an extraordinary year for our Highwood community, and our team is excited to see all the new opportunities the renovation and the new space will bring in the years to come. Our priority will continue to be creating a healthier and more interconnected community inclusive of everyone.

Sincerely,

Carmen Patlan  
Executive Director, Highwood Library & Community Center (HLCC)

# FOUR PILLARS OF SERVICE

HLCC has a diverse range of service areas that cater to the needs of our community. It offers traditional library services, such as book lending and reference assistance, as well as specialized services for children and teens, like reading programs and homework help. In addition, the Library provides adult literacy and workforce development services to help members of the community enhance their employability. Lastly, the Library offers Health Equity services, such as health education resources and wellness programs, to promote better health outcomes for all. With these four distinct service areas, the library is well-equipped to serve its community in a variety of ways.



## Library Services

- The Library offers relevant, free multicultural and bilingual programs, services, and resources for Highwood and Illinois residents of all ages and ethnicities, including traditional library services like story time, book discussions, and summer reading programs for all ages in addition to literacy-focused bilingual programming.
- The library made every effort to remain open and accessible to the community during the renovation.

## Children's & Teen Services



- Early Childhood Literacy provides the foundation needed to foster a level of comfort with learning environments and prepares children for a structured learning environment.
- Current Teen Advisory Board (TAB) membership has grown to 31 middle and high school students from Districts 112 and 113, allowing teens to take charge of their own development, and giving them the opportunity to explore different ideas, express themselves creatively, and work together as a team.



## Adult Literacy Services

- Our Adult Literacy Program provides foundational skills including English as a Second Language, Spanish language classes, General Education Development (GED) classes in Spanish.
- Citizenship tutoring prepares students to take the U.S. Citizenship Test and provides tips on how to prepare for the Citizenship test.
- Computer classes provide students with the opportunities to explore, experiment, and develop expertise using real-world applications that prepare them to be more knowledgeable and digitally connected.

## Health Equity Services



- Our Health Equity Services provide Preventative Health Education through weekly workshops hosted by the Library's Community Health Workers.
- Health Resources through partnerships with health care providers. This includes COVID-19, influenza, pneumonia, and shingles vaccinations, as well as physical health screenings.
- Emotional and Mental Health Education through weekly sessions that raise mental health awareness.
- Support Groups and Counseling to community members in a safe and supportive space to share experiences, feelings, and coping strategies.

# HIGHLAND PARK SHOOTING RESPONSE

In response to the outpouring of need in our community as a result of the Highland Park mass shooting, the Highwood Library & Community Center mobilized to provide trauma-informed care and emergency crisis response. Because of our grassroots engagement efforts and willingness to schedule supportive services when community members were available, we witnessed an unprecedented response. Community members from Highland Park and Highwood responded in numbers higher than we could have anticipated. In the three weeks following the incident, the library provided 547 sessions of counseling and case management to 337 people.

Through partnering with social and behavioral health service agencies, we were able to meet the demand for emergency services. Partner agencies including Nicasa Behavioral Health Services and Community Youth Network (CYN) Counseling Center, Youth and Family Counseling, American Red Cross of Illinois, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois along with others, have generously partnered with the Highwood Library & Community Center to ensure that this need for emergency counseling was met. The Library & Community Center is committed to providing long-term support to the community.



Teen volunteers assembling care packages for victims.



One of our case managers, Diana Alvey, working at the Resource Navigation Center at Lincoln School.





# OUR RENOVATION

Last November, we broke ground on our long-awaited renovation that will completely transform the current library building into a state-of-the-art community center that inspires innovation and self-empowerment. The updated space will have a laptop bar, computer lab, meeting rooms, two additional family bathrooms, collaborative work areas, experiential learning centers, a renovated community room, and a new facade. Increased accessibility, including a main entryway that is handicap-accessible and a renovated mechanical system throughout the building, will create a welcoming, safe environment for everyone.

Our staff, volunteers, and community partners have all stepped up during this time to ensure that programs and services can continue. Many of our Children's and Teen programs, as well as our Adult Literacy classes, are taking place within walking distance of the library at Oak Terrace Elementary School and Northwood Middle School. Our Health Equity team is hosting support groups and counseling sessions at the Church of the Redeemer right across the street from the library. Zumba classes are being offered just a few blocks away at the Highwood Recreation Center. As the physical library changes and grows, we are embracing our role in the community as a Community Center. Throughout the renovation, we'll make sure that our community continues to benefit from our programs and services, and we'll look for innovative ways to strengthen our partnerships in order to position the library as an engine for creating a vibrant, connected, and inclusive community.

Welcome Desk



Adult Department



Young Adult Department



Children's Department



*Breaking ground  
on our renovation  
November 2022*

# A NEW BRAND



We are thrilled to announce our new library brand, officially launching this fall but on full display in this Annual Report. As a Library and Community Center, we understand the importance of being a strong foundation for learning and growth in our community. We have a fresh new look that uses blocks as a visual representation of this concept. We believe that just as building blocks come together to create something greater, our library brings together books, technology, and people to provide a strong foundation for lifelong learning. Our new brand represents our commitment to being an essential part of the community's growth and development. We can't wait to continue serving our patrons and providing them with the building blocks they need to succeed.

## Promoting Early Literacy

Our early literacy programs, which include Preschool Storytime and our kindergarten preparedness program ¡Todos Juntos, 1, 2, 3!, have been highly successful in promoting the development of children's literacy skills, cognitive abilities, and overall enjoyment of reading and learning. To date, 40 children have benefited from these life-changing programs.

## Making to Learn

As we prepare to open a dynamic Makerspace as a part of our renovation project, we are excited to bring Maker Culture to Highwood. We kickstarted this new initiative with our STEAM-Powered Teens programs which aim to inspire middle and high school students to engage in technology-based projects. This year, we have introduced over 90 students to STEM-based programming!



# HIGHLIGHTS & INITIATIVES

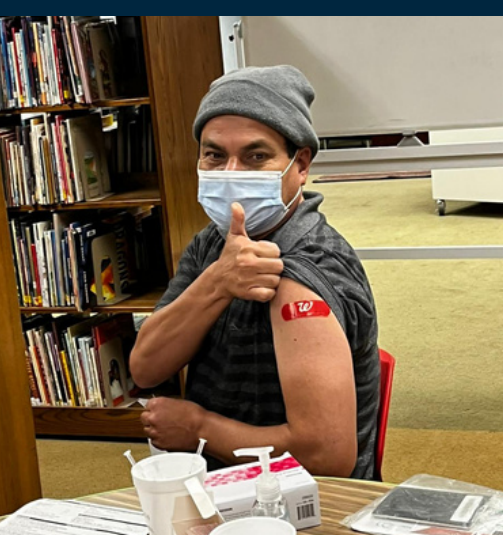
## Supporting Mental Health

Community members struggle with barriers to good health including problems with their economic stability, sub-par housing, access to education, lack of a support system, and lack of access to health care. Health Equity provides access to weekly education sessions on mental health concepts, free counseling, and support groups, helping individuals to overcome barriers to accessing care and professional treatment.

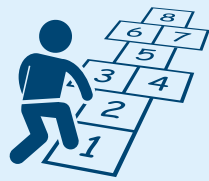
## Improving English Fluency

Our English as a Second Language classes have expanded to offer multiple levels, meeting adult learners where they are at. English as a Second Language classes are offered at various levels to strengthen adult learners' ability to develop English language proficiency by strengthening their oral and written English language skills. As skills are developed within our supportive environment, students' confidence increases, which results in greater fluency.

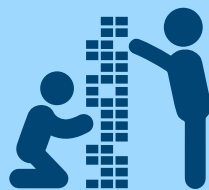




**43,358**  
Total number of visits



**3,393**  
Children's program attendees



**1,905**  
Teen program attendees



**8,808**  
Adult program attendees



**9,126**  
Physical material checkouts



**1,720**  
Digital checkouts



**3,137 / 136,063**  
Computer uses and minutes logged on



**1,258**  
Active library card holders

**FY23**  
**BY THE**  
**NUMBERS**





## Contact our Board:

[highwoodlibraryboard@gmail.com](mailto:highwoodlibraryboard@gmail.com)

## Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees generally meets at 7:00pm on the fourth Monday of each month. Meetings are open to the public.

**Lucy Hospodarsky, President**

**Janell Cleland, Vice-President**

**Nora Loreda, Treasurer**

**Catherine Regalado, Secretary**

**Bertha Chavez**

**Paul Martinez**

**Jason Muelver**

**Lorena Victorica**

## Friends

The Friends is a 501(c)(3) organization that supports quality library services through advocacy, fundraising, and volunteering.

**Gayle Meyers, President**

**Kristi Winchester, Vice-President**

**Marty Rosenthal, Treasurer**

**Laura Singer, Secretary**

**Luis Gonzalez**

## Learn about our Friends:

[www.friendshighwoodlibrary.org](http://www.friendshighwoodlibrary.org)







# CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions?  
Connect with us!



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